TRACER

McHENRY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

(An Illinois Not-For-Profit Corp)

6422 Main Street, Union, Illinois 60180

Telephone: 815 923-2267

Editor: Alvin Maidak

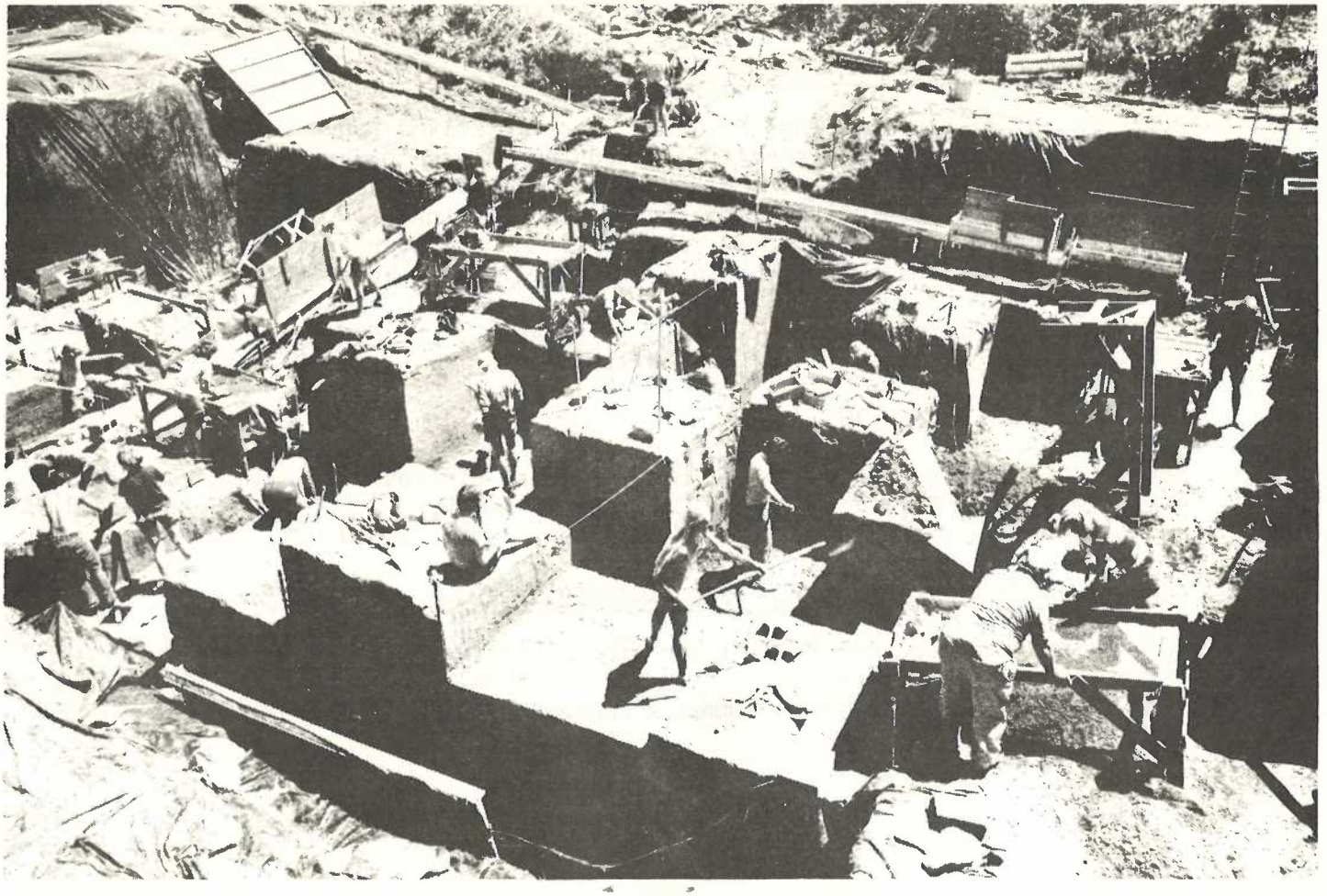
Volume I - No. 2 Quarterly Newsletter September, 1974

May 1974 Annual Meeting

This meeting featured Dr. Stuart Streuver, Professor of Anthropology at Northwestern University, who presented slides and a lecture on diggings at the Theodore Koster farm north of Pere Marquette State Park in southern Illinois. Dr. Streuver, other archeologists and students have been excavating for some time now and have reached a level approximately thirty feet below the surface. Remains gathered have been identified from a civilization that existed about 6000 B. C.!

The slides, lecture and audience questions and responses were of such high interest that a seminar evolved with the gathering of about one hundred fifty members and guests.

Note: An article in section one of the Chicago Tribune on Sunday, August 25th, reported on the Koster findings.



Verne Carpenter at work in the main trench at Koster. Photo by D.R. BASTON

The business meeting preceeded the main speaker at which time directors were nominated, elected and installed for 1974-1977.

Beverages and snacks were served from the kitchen at the meeting's conclusion.

Progress on Museum Building

Intermittent repairing, renovating and painting are continuing by volunteers. Call 815 923-2267 to volunteer or make donations.

The sloping roofs over the main building and it's first addition have been repaired and shingled as of this writing. Gutter and downspouts, cupola and other adjoining structures will be repaired and finalized soon.

With the roofing completed, work on the second floor rooms will proceed in the near future. Funds have been provided and pledged for this project.

Zoning Hearing on Amusement Park

On August 20, 1974 a conditional use permit to operate a western-type-flavor town and amusement park next to the Illinois Railway Museum was NOT recommended by the County Zoning Board of Appeals. The original hearing was held the previous week in Union and attended by Dorothy McEachren, Betty Oberg and Alvin Maidak. Objectors present pointed out that the enterprise as petitioned would not add to the historical nor educational flavor of the area as well as unleashing a pandora's box of problems for the community in general.

Membership Dues and Dona tions

Your support is appreciated as ever. Ask your friends, relatives and neighbors to join THEIR historical society efforts. Remember: Maintenance, light, water, heat and telephone bills are paid entirely from income from dues.

Cancelling Deductions to Charitable Institutions!

Bills in the U. S. Senate and House of Representatives concern the possibility of cancelling income tax deductions on contributions to charitable institutions, not-for-profit organizations and churches. Please write to both your U. S. senators and representative, registering your feelings. DO IT NOW! Otherwise we w ill have difficulty in fund raising if the bills are passed intact. The bills are U. S. Senate Bill 3647 and House Bill 636. Write today!

Hon. Robert McClory
13th District, Illinois (House Bill 636)
Room 2452 - RHOB
Washington, D. C. 20510

Senator Cha rles H. Percy
Room.1200 - SNOB
Washington, D. C. 20510

Senator Adlai E. Stevenson III
Room 456 - OSOB
Washington, D. C. 20510

Senate Bill 3647

HARRISON HOUSE, Marengo, Illinois, Window Display

Old vacuum cleaners and early Oliver typewriters were set up in this Men's clothing store window display area August 4th through 14th. The Harrisons, the store proprietors received many favorable comments regarding this display, and other displays in past years.

If any members have businesses or friends who have businesses with window display space and would like to help make our efforts better known please contact the museum office. Recall that we have 7000 plus items from which to choose!

THE OLIVER TYPEWRITER

It was nearly 80 years ago that a Methodist minister of Epworth, Iowa, while preparing his sermon with pen and ink, asked himself why it was that he could not buy a typewriter that would write in "sight". It had always been a laborious task to write them with pen and ink. Up to that time in using any typewriter it was necessary to lift the platen and see what had been written underneath.

After a couple of years of experimenting he perfected the first visible typewriter. This typewriter was named the Oliver after the inventor, Thomas Oliver. Mr. Oliver, during his life time, had patents on a panoramic camera, a moving picture camera and at the time of his death was experimenting on and toward perfection of a cotton picker.

About 1900 a corporation was formed under the name of THE OLIVER TYPEWRITER COMPANY, with headquarters in Chicago. A few machines were made in Chicago, which proved the success of the venture. The company expanded to include a large factory in Woodstock and a seven story office building in the Chicago Loop. Branches were operated in most of the large cities in the United States, Europe and South America. In Woodstock, peak production was 375 typewriters per day with employment of about 875 employees. The combined employment was around 1700 workers, including all branch offices and agencies.

During the peak production between 1900 and 1928 over 950,000 Oliver typewriters were produced in Woodstock. Many homes were built in and around Woodstock as a result of employment at the plant.

It is suggested that Members of the McHenry County Historical Society take time to see the Oliver Typewriter Exhibit, at the Museum. It includes many of the older models and photographs of the exterior and interior of many departments in the plant. One interesting photograph is that of Model #1, the original Oliver. All Olivers were made with the three row keyboard. The latest Oliver, a model never manufactured and never sold, had four rows of keys with front stroke operation.

Editor's Note: One of those formerly employed, right up to the last day of operation in 1928, is Chester Nelson, presently Treasurer of our society.

Chester has made considerable effort to gather photos, printed literature and recorded his own experiences and information in the history of this once important company of this area. You can usually find Chester at the museum keeping track of those important dues and donations up to date. He invites you to visit him at the museum and talk about Olivers and other items.

Log Cabin - McHenry County Fair - 1974

About 600 visitors saw the Gannon cabin at this year's fair. Children's clothes, complete with mannequins, as well as toys were on display. Many out-of-towners also visited the display.

Volunteers needed!

Following are areas in which help is needed. 1. Fire engine restoration. 2. Readers to write up short articles of local historical sites, old settler anecdotes, etc., to be written in the quarterly newsletter. 3. Map restoration.

Any individual, family, or group interested in donating funds to restore an 1862 map, in poor condition. A quotation on cost from R. R. Donnelly places the cost at over $1000.00. 4. Accessioning. Help catalog items donated by members and others for permanent record. 5. Carpentry and painting. Small and large projects, repairs and renovations, inside and outside museum building. 6. Pictures. Replace backings. 7. Two sofas are badly in need of reupholstering - estimate on the one in Music Room is $350.00. Does anyone wish to underwrite this project. We will have an estimate on second one soon and will let you know.

Donations are STILL Tax Deductible

All donations to the historical society, financial or artifacts, are deductible for the year donated. Any question concerning value of artifacts should be directed to the local office of the Internal Revenue Service in Woodstock.

Tracings

Have you seen or do you have:

1. A double round globe lamp - original kerosene.

2. A player piano with rolls you would like to donate for future generations.

3. Cut-out paper dolls.

4. Information on the records of the Woodstock Mail Quartette, organized in 1907 and continuing for 40 years. Members were: Tom Merwin, John Fitch, Clarence Coonrad and Ben Anderson.

5. Who knows anything about the piano which was on Abraham Lincoln's funeral train. We have heard it is somewhere, in someone's home, not too far from the Museum??

6. We ask again - will someone please come forward and tell who's back yard houses the Woodstock City Park Fountain - it was probably taken down prior to the erection of the Soldiers and Sailors Monument. Call 815 923 2267.

Museum Apartment

The apartment in the museum is all ready for a custodian or custodians. A man and wife could move in any time. If you know of anyone who is interested, have them call Dorothy McEachren at 338 1985 or 923 2267, or Ruth Cripe at 923 4105 to make an appointment for an interview.

Recent Acquisitions

A beautiful mantle clock has been donated by Mr. & Mrs. Otto Schauer of Union.

About a month ago, the Shearer Pharmacy in Marengo moved to another location on the corner of State and Washington Streets. The present owners, Mr. & Mrs. R. D. Butzow donated the fixtures, both wall and showcases, to the museum, from the old store building. The Shearer Pharmacy was established by Mr. W. H. Dougherty in 1907 - known then as the Dougherty Pharmacy. The next owner was A. E. Shearer. When we get the second floor of the museum renovated, one room will display half the wall fixtures and showcases. The other half of the wall fixtures have been placed on the platform in the main Exhibit Hall, so their beauty can be enjoyed.

Closing Quote

"How to save the old that's worth saving, whether in landscape, houses, manners, institutions, or human types, is one of our greatest problems, and the one that we bother least about."

John Galsworthy
(1867 - 1933)

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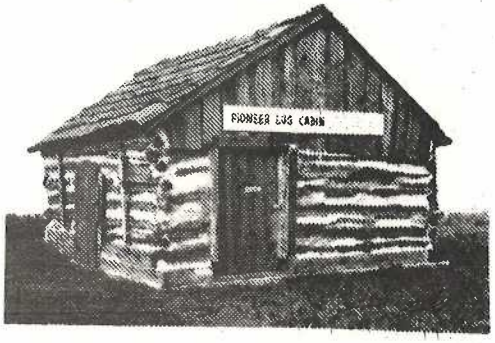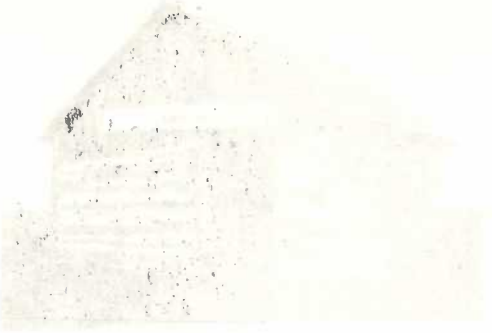
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